

Scott-Brown's Diseases of the Ear, Nose and Throat, vol 3: The Nose and Sinuses. 4th ednJohn Ballantyne & John Groves (ed) pp 495
£150 for 4 vols Sevenoaks: Butterworths 1979

New editions of this comprehensive textbook are eagerly requested in departmental and medical centre libraries, and the third volume of the fourth edition maintains the progressive rise in standards we have become accustomed to over thirty years.

In the eight years between editions there are not many advances to record in this volume, but the rearrangement from the previous thirteen to the present twenty chapters increases its depth of coverage. Editorial control is more difficult and there is occasional deliberate reduplication of subject material.

Several of the chapters are written by surgeons of experience who are acknowledged national experts in their respective subjects. Particular attention may be drawn to the excellence of the chapters on the nasal septum and surgery of the pterygo-palatine fossa.

The emphasis on some conditions has been increased by new chapters on congenital diseases, foreign bodies, epistaxis, nasal polyposis, abnormalities of smell and non-healing granulomas. Soundly structured other chapters of value are repeated from the last edition, some feature new contributors.

Previous coloured art work has been discarded and replaced by three plates showing coloured photographs illustrating abnormalities of the external nose and face. The text has been increased by a third and is enhanced by doubling the index. Comprehensive references continue to be provided after each chapter.

This volume will be valued by the trainee working systematically for higher qualifications and as a reference base by an established surgeon looking for detailed advice on differential diagnosis or the approach to a rare clinical condition.

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Carcinogens: Identification and Mechanisms of Action. A C Griffin & C R Shaw (ed)

pp 505 \$49.40 New York: Raven Press 1979

Recent attempts to establish a legislative framework with which to control or abolish the release of animal carcinogens into the environment have resulted, perhaps inevitably, in attempts to reduce the phenomenon of chemically-induced cancer to a simple equation. While these efforts are not to be derided, they do little to solve the fundamental enigma of cancer. It is therefore stimulating to read a book concerned with chemical carcinogens that approaches the subject within the context of its established immensity.

The obvious authority of the contributors and the skill of the editors have transformed this book from being the mere proceedings of a symposium into a most useful review of the current avenues of research into the mechanism of induced cancer. Not only are the more familiar subjects such as bacterial mutation assays and animal bioassays discussed in a new light, but many oft-neglected topics such as the role of histones in the expression of a carcinogen are dealt with in detail.

The most notable feature of this book is its expansiveness; time and again the carcinogenic process is presented as an aberrant reflection of normal life: this is both refreshing and stimulating and is captured in Becker's introduction, itself worthy of separate publication; for example: '... There never has been a better milieu in which to achieve the alteration which we consider to be malignancy than in the formative days of earth... We might well ask if some of these progenitors of life are those primordial genes which, conserved for eons, need only exposure to the dimly remembered carcinogenic conditions of their genesis to reexpress themselves.'

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The Sketches of Erinensis Martin Fallon (ed)
pp 247 £6.95 London: Skilton & Shaw 1979

From its inception on 5 October 1823, the *Lancet* immediately became the most popular and – for the medical establishment – most feared of medical journals. Its founding editor, the erstwhile surgeon Thomas Wakley, indeed wielded his pen as a lancet – cutting sharply to bleed and to drain suppurative lesions in the body politic of medicine. His unflinching mission was performed with the aid of a number of correspondents, probably the most effective being the Irish commentator who bore the *nom de plume* 'Erinensis' (identified as Dr Hennis Green in 1900, 76 years after his first contribution appeared). Mr Martin Fallon has rendered a valuable service by assembling a representative selection of his former countryman's writings, with the addition of an interesting introductory chapter and detailed notes. The satirical 'sketches' deal with Irish medical institutions and the professional and medicopolitical activities of such colourful characters as Abraham Colles, Whitley Stokes and John Timothy Kirby. The style of *Erinensis* is invariably witty, urbane and remorselessly honest. His sketches give the reader the real flavour of professional life over 150 years ago, and show how relatively dull in contrast is modern medical journalism, constrained as it is by good taste – and our libel laws.

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